

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-78 are pending in this application. Claims 1-8, 32-44, 49-76 and 78 are withdrawn from consideration. Accordingly, claims 9-31, 45-48 and 77 are remaining. Among the remaining claims, claims 9, 20, 45 and 77 are independent. Claims 9-14, 16, 18-25, 27, 30, 45, 46, 48 and 77 are rejected. Claims 15, 17, 26, 28, 29, 31 and 47 are objected to. By this amendment, all of the rejected claims and withdrawn claims (i.e., claims 1-14, 16, 18-25, 27, 30, 32-46 and 48-78) are cancelled. The objected to claims (i.e., claims 15, 17, 26, 28, 29, 31 and 47) are herein amended. No new matter has been added.

Objection

Claims

Claims 15, 17, 26, 28, 29, 31 and 47 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. The Examiner indicates that these objected to claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 15, 17, 26, 28, 29, 31 and 47 have been rewritten in independent form as shown above to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Drawings

The Office Action indicates that Figures 23 and 24 should be designated by a legend such as --PRIOR ART-- because only that which is old is illustrated.

Each of Figures 23 and 24 is amended to label as --PRIOR ART-- as required by the Office Action.

Applicants respectfully request that these objections be withdrawn.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 11 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 as having insufficient antecedent basis for the limitations in the claims.

Claims 11 and 18 have been cancelled rendering the rejections directed to these claims moot.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102

In paragraph seven (7) of the Office Action, claims 9-12, 14, 18, 20-23, 25, 30 and 77 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,686,954 to Kitaguchi ("Kitaguchi").

In paragraph nine (9) of the Office Action, claims 45, 46 and 48 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,771,403 to Imada ("Imada").

All of the rejected claims, i.e., claims 9-12, 14, 18, 20-23, 25, 30, 45, 46, 48 and 77, have been cancelled rendering the rejections directed to these claims moot.

Applicants note that all of the rejected claims and withdrawn claims have been cancelled. Applicants further note that the objected to claims have been rewritten in independent forms to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Accordingly, Applicants believe that the application is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

AUTHORIZATION

No petitions or additional fees are believed due for this amendment and/or any accompanying submissions. However, to the extent that any additional fees and/or petition is required, including a petition for extension of time, Applicants hereby petition the Commissioner to grant such petition, and hereby authorizes the Commissioner to charge any additional fees, including any fees which may be required for such petition, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-4500 (Order No. 1232-4733). A DUPLICATE COPY OF THIS SHEET IS ENCLOSED.

An early and favorable examination on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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